A NEW APPROACH FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) SYSTEMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA THROUGH UNESCO’S “BETTER EDUCATION FOR AFRICA’S RISE” (BEAR) PROJECT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the effects of the Development of National TVET systems through the implementation of UNESCO’s capacity building project, named Better Education for Africa’s Rise (BEAR) focused on curriculum development in most needed industry sectors in Southern African countries. The BEAR project supports 5 selected Southern African Development Community (SADC) Botswana, DR Congo, Malawi, Namibia, and Zambia, as the SADC region lacked capacity systems of transferable knowledge and skills. There was a sharp decline in international support to TVET in Africa since 1990 because a critique of the failure of African TVET was widely accepted. Nevertheless, after millennium, the rapid changes in industrial structure support TVET. The BEAR project aims to: implement sectoral programmes through public and private partnership and improve the capacity of TVET systems to develop evidence-based TVET policies. The main direct target groups are TVET policymakers, experts, teachers and youth.

This project theoretically seeks globalization of TVET sectors in SADC countries so that young people in Africa could earn a globally competitive job. As globalization expands common models of social order expanding the strength of organizations involved. Three main types of data: on-site interviews, artifacts of competency-based curriculum, and policy documents were collected and analyzed to find out in what way BEAR contributed to build capacity of TVET systems at local and national level. The results will share the outcomes and challenges identified during the CD development process and how the countries ensured the implementation fidelity to make the project successful. To conclude, we will discuss the implication of the project's outcomes and its effect to Botswana in terms of capacity building for the identified sectors amidst the country’s efforts of getting TVET sector globalized by seeking models of their ‘actorhood.’

Keywords: UNESCO, TVET, Curriculum Development, SADC.

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of UNESCO’s Better Education for Africa’s Rise (BEAR) project on the development of national technical and vocational education training (TVET) curriculum in Botswana. The effects were examined in terms of (a) The dimensions of the social impact related to the development of new TVET systems at the national level (b) A correlation between the social impact on the development of national TVET educational systems and the pressures of mass education implementation in Botswana. (c) The role of UNESCO, as an International Organization, on the development of the National TVET Education Systems in Botswana. In 2016, the UNESCO BEAR project started its 5th year
implementing the curriculum at the national level. BEAR specifically focused on UNESCO’s intentions of building capacity through developing a demand driven curriculum in most needed industry sectors in Botswana, which faced some challenges as Public Colleges do not have flexibility and limited resources to implement them.

The BEAR project was formed to support 5 selected Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries (Botswana, DR Congo, Malawi, Namibia, and Zambia) in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, as in the SADC region it lacked capacity systems of foundational and transferable knowledge and skills. TVET is normally provided through comprehensive programmes that are part of the national education system, commonly based on a curriculum, with a broad content rather than "training" as more narrowly focused on the labour market and the job (Allais, 2012). Since 1990, the international support of TVET in Africa declined because a critique of the failure of African TVET was widely accepted. After millennium, the rapid changes in industrial structure support TVET became focused on a set of systemic changes, i.e., new governance structures; competency-based curricula; national qualification frameworks (UNESCO, 2013). As the global economic downturn is impacting on unemployment in the SADC countries, TVET promotes learning and life skills for young people, drop-outs, and adults of the region (UNESCO, 2015). Nowadays Technical and Vocational education and skills development are becoming increasingly important policy issues in developing countries (King, 2009; Palmer, 2009) it was part the Post 2015 Education agenda debates (UNESCO, 2014) and is a clearly important within Global 4 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The African Union’s Second Decade of Education has also defined TVET as a high priority area for investment for Africa (UNESCO, 2015).

More specifically, the BEAR project aims to: implement sectoral programmes in selected countries of the SADC region through public and private partnership; and improve the knowledge base and capacity of TVET systems to develop evidence-based TVET policies. The main direct target groups are TVET policymakers, experts and teaching staff as well as young drop-outs and unemployed youth. This project theoretically seeks a globalization of TVET sectors in SADC countries so that young people in Africa could earn a globally competitive job. As Meyer (2000) argued, globalization expands common models of social order becoming authoritative in many social settings by increasing the political and military interdependence and expanding the strength of the organizations involved. The world polity and cultural system legitimate strong nation-state identities as the dominant actors, which produce very strong tendencies for the adoption of common models of modernity, despite differences in resources and local culture (Meyer, 2000)

Data were collected from three sources: on-site interviews of participants (teachers and students), stakeholders, and industry experts involved in Botswana TVET curriculum on the Tourism sector; artifacts of competency-based demand-driven curriculum; and related policy documents about national qualifications framework. An interview protocol was constructed based on questions around three issues described in the above. A 30 minute interview was conducted with a focus group in each party. All interviews were transcribed to acquire "Thick" information providing insights and in-depth knowledge of the project.

This particular study selected Botswana to report since its best practice performance and the data became available according to the timeline of BEAR project implementation. The data were gleaned from three different trades (travel and hospitality management and culinary arts) of the Tourism sector in Botswana. The sector was selected as the most demanded industry sector according to the results from a labour market analysis. The government of this country witnessed the continued need for programmes that dealt with issues of youth transitions to the labour market in particular. Therefore the government made a great effort in promoting its TVET system
by enhancing and suggesting basic educational policy directions and relevant TVET education strategies. Nowadays, the Botswana's actual National Development Plan 10 (NDP) 2009-2016 aims "to continue to improve access to high quality technical and vocational education and training (TVET), with a view to producing a competent, innovative and internationally competitive National Human Resource with ability to contribute to the socio-economic and technological advancement of the country, the creation of employment, the reduction of inequity and engaging those affected by poverty" (Republic of Botswana, 2009).

Picture 1: Botswana Workshop on Curriculum Development, August 2013

Data were analysed using a qualitative method. Individual read and re-read of each participant’s interview data, curriculum artefacts, and policy documents until it was identified a unit of data, which refers to “any meaningful (or potentially meaningful) segment of data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). In this study, the unit of data was any information related to the social impact on the development of national TVET educational systems. As it was read each participant’s data set, it was written by the researcher emerging insights, feelings, perceptions and questions in the margins. Then we carefully checked and revisited the interpretation by comparing and sharing it with other TVET and curriculum developer expert to accurately understand the participants’ thoughts, perceptions and feelings. Then we made a separate list of comments, of comments, questions, and concepts generated from the comparison and discussion, and then compared this list with the list derived from our previous analysis. We then merged the two lists into one, which reflected the conceptual direction of the research to this point. Next, we re-reviewed all our notes again and attempted to develop preliminary patterns or themes. We then manually coded the patterns or themes, using the understanding rubric of the social impact on the development of national TVET educational systems, as being one of three levels of impact: Low, Medium, and High. When we disagreed on the level, we discussed it until we reached a consensus. Lastly, after the analysis of each participant’s data was complete and emergent themes of BEAR’s social impact had been identified, we conducted a comprehensive cross-case analysis (Yin, 2003). We investigated the entire body of analysis in order to refine, confirm or refute our preliminary
analyses. In alignment with the research questions, we developed a word table to visually display overarching themes (Yin, 2003) as shown in table 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1: Interview to Head of Department for Hospitality and Tourism from Maun Technical College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you have learned</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Essential Things to make it successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- an eye opener</td>
<td>- continual training from the focal person</td>
<td>- implementation of the programme at Gaborone Technical College and the assistance provided by the industry</td>
<td>- the industry is integrated in developing national curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- number of skills from the DACUM processes</td>
<td>- not trained in DACUM</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Match the graduates colleges with what the industry really needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- understanding the importance of the critical part that the industry plays in curriculum development.</td>
<td>- resolve by networking with the industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Find better ways of working with the industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- dynamics of curriculum development and how to fit it to the level of students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- better working relationships amongst curriculum developer’s policy makers and accrediting bodies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 2: NPO BEAR Project Botswana since 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you have learned</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Essential Things to make it successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- imposing a foreign system into a developing, emerging economy is less successful than the remodeling of what already exists</td>
<td>- Convince staff not to abandon the former unit standards system</td>
<td>- proves the country has sufficient experience to develop curriculum themselves</td>
<td>- UNESCO has provided our country with internationally competitive expertise so that we could build a capacity of curriculum development for TVET.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Benchmarking is better</td>
<td>- Convince staff that they had a part to play in the shaping of the project blueprint and assessment procedures</td>
<td>- the country is ultimately responsible for its education system</td>
<td>- The identification of a sector which is clearly established as requiring education intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- promotion of efficiency and utilization is the primary focus of the Government</td>
<td></td>
<td>- quality curriculum can be developed and implemented quickly</td>
<td>- Involvement of awarding bodies, education authorities, quality assurance bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- More emphasis/time should be allocated to assisting implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Representative of Botswana National Commission for UNESCO (NATCOM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you have learned</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Essential Things to make it successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To build a capacity, it is important to involve various relevant stakeholders, e.g., industry experts, TVET institutions in order to make the partnership successful.</td>
<td>To have a positive impact on the youth unemployment at national level</td>
<td>Through the labor market analysis conducted it was possible to identify which areas of TVET training are needed in the country</td>
<td>- TVET Training should be done according to labor market needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The necessity to constantly review the curriculum should not be done by the Ministry of Education alone</td>
<td>The necessity to assess and review the BTEP program before the start of the BEAR project, in order to identify the existing gaps on TVET Training.</td>
<td>The improvement of the TVET education system and its quality</td>
<td>- UNESCO as a key player in improving the TVET sector as a platform that provides technical expertise within the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of Benchmarking</td>
<td>Through the labor market analysis conducted it was possible to identify which areas of TVET training are needed in the country</td>
<td>The review and assessment of the curriculum should be done regularly according to the needs of the labor market</td>
<td>The government support and collaboration is important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The major findings demonstrated; first, those concerned with the Botswana TVET curriculum on the Tourism sector perceived “High” level of understanding and positive impact on their society in terms of social life, economy, and increased local autonomy. This reflected a positive role of United Nation’s projects. Second, the way to approach the development of national TVET educational system and mass education implementation was a mix between local autonomy and ownership of curriculum development and global model of curriculum development. Third, each party of the curriculum team -participants, stakeholders, and industry experts presented a disparity of what it should be in terms of national qualification framework. These findings are associated with Meyer’s (2000) argument about globalization aforementioned above. Amidst many Africa countries’ efforts of getting TVET sectors globalized by seeking models of their ‘actorhood,’ the implication of these findings will be discussed in terms of Botswana context.
Picture 2: BEAR project students at the Gaborone Technical College in Botswana.

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